

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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TAGS: OREP (KENNEDY, EDWARD M.)

SUBJ: CODEL KENNEDY'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA MAY 21-24

REF : A. STATE 105940; B. JIDDA 3508; C. JIDDA 3567

SUMMARY: DURING VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA MAY 21-24, CODEL KENNEDY WAS GIVEN TREATMENT SIMILAR TO CABINET LEVEL VISITORS. SENATOR CALLED ON KING, CROWN PRINCE AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS. SAUDIS WELCOMED HIS STRONG OPPOSITION TO EVER USING FORCE AGAINST SAG IN CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT UPON A NEW OIL BOYCOTT. PROBABLY THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED BY SENATOR'S VIEWS THAT U.S. HAS ONLY A VERY LIMITED ABILITY TO OVERRIDE OBJECTIONS ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE TO FUTURE MOVES TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT; HIS CO-SIGNATURE WITH 75 OTHER SENATORS OF LETTER TO PRESIDENT MAY 22 ON ARMS TO ISRAEL ALSO WILL DISAPPOINT THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA MAY 21-24, HE CALLED UPON KING KHALID BIN ABD AL-AZIZ, CROWN PRINCE FAHD BIN ABD AL-AZIZ, SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN ABD AL-AZIZ, AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL. AT KENNEDY'S REQUEST NO EMBASSY OFFICERS ATTENDED ANY OF THESE MEETINGS. DINNERS
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WERE GIVEN IN CODEL'S HONOR BY MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AHMED

ZAKI YAMANI (MAY 22) AND MINISTER FOR PLANNING HISHAM NAZER (MAY 23). ON FRIDAY, MAY 23, SENATOR VISITED THE UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM AND MINERALS IN DHAHRAN, LUNCED WITH ARAMCO BOARD CHAIRMAN FRANK JUNGERS, AND AFTERWARDS OVERFLEW EASTERN PROVINCE OIL SITES WHILE RECEIVING FURTHER BRIEFING FROM JUNGERS.

2. THIS WAS KENNEDY'S FIRST VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, AND HIS TREATMENT BY SAUDIS IN MANY WAYS SIMILAR TO THAT GIVEN TO U.S. CABINET LEVEL OFFICIALS. HE AND PARTY WERE HOUSED AT THE SAG'S GUEST PALACE AS THE FULL GUESTS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND HIS ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND VARIOUS MEETINGS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IN THE PRESS (SEPTTEL). SAUDIS TOOK PARTICULAR NOTE OF SENATOR'S LENGTHY MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD, WHICH LASTED MORE THAN 2 1/2 HOURS.

3. DURING DINNER AT YAMANI'S AND HISHAM NAZER'S SENATOR RECEIVED MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PROSPECT FOR U.S. ACTION IN BRINGING ABOUT A PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE STATUS OF THE REAPPRAISAL OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE AREA. POINT SENATOR MADE REPEATEDLY WAS THAT DESPITE CLOSE TIES U.S. ENJOYS WITH ISRAEL, U.S. CANNOT FORCE ISRAEL TO ACCEPT A PARTICULAR SET OF PEACE TERMS NOR OVERRIDE, ON ARABS' BEHALF, AND OBSTACLES THAT MAY EXIST IN ISRAEL TO EARLY PROGRESS ON PEACE TALKS. SOME SAUDIS HAVE COMMENTED TO EMPHATICALLY THAT WHAT SENATOR SAID ABOUT LIMITS OF U.S. INFLUENCE IN MIDDLE EAST DOES NOT ENTIRELY ACCORD WITH THE PUBLIC AND REPEATED U.S. COMMITMENT TO WORK TO BRING ABOUT A PEACE SETTLEMENT.

4. THE SENATOR ALSO RECEIVED NUMEROUS QUERIES ABOUT HIS AND THE CONGRESS'S STAND ON ALLEGED U.S. THREATS TO USE MILITARY FORCE AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA--USUALLY IN CONNECTION WITH A REIMPOSITION OF THE OIL BOYCOTT. TO ALL SUCH QUERIES SENATOR REPLIED THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS WOULD ABSOLUTELY NEVER TOLERATE THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST AN ARAB STATE FOR SUCH A REASON, AND THAT U.S. PUBLIC OPINION WAS OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSED TO ANY ADVENTURES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS KIND. IT WAS HIS GUESS THAT SUCH STATEMENTS WERE DESIGNED TO KEEP THE ARABS OFF BALANCE, AND PERHAPS TO DETER THEM FROM THINKING ABOUT BOYCOTT LINES IN THEIR CRISIS "E&E" PLANNING. (AS A RESULT OF DISCUSSIONS WITH ARAMCO'S FRANK JUNGERS ON MAY 23, WE BELIEVE SENATOR WAS IMPRESSED BY THE SPEED AND EASE WITH WHICH CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE COULD BE DONE TO OIL INSTALLATIONS IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE. WITH REGARD TO THE HIGH PRESSURE BERRI FIELD IN PARTICULAR, MR. JUNGERS NOTED

THAT IF THE SAFETY DEVICES ON THE VARIOUS WELLS WERE NEGATED AND THE WELLS BROKE LOOSE, HE COULD NOT FORESEE WHEN THE OUTPOURING FROM EACH WELL OF 100,000 B/D COULD BE CONTAINED.)

5. COMMENT: SENATOR SPOKE TO SAUDIS AS A MAN OF FORCE, VIGOR, AND WITH PRE-EXISTNET STRONG OPINIONS. THEY PROBABLY DO NOT THINK THAT THEIR PRESENTATIONS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED HIS STAND ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI QUESTION; THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISAPPOINTED BY HIS CO-SIGNATURE OF SENATE'S RECENT APPEAL TO PRESIDENT FORD MAY 22 FOR MORE AND FASTER ARMS ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL. THE SAUDIS MAY ALSO BE SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED BY THE KENNEDY VISIT WHEN THEY CONTRAST IT WITH THE IMPACT THE VISITS TO MIDDLE EAST RECENTLY HAD ON THE POSITIONS OF SENATORS PERCY AND MCGOVERN. GOING INTO THIS VISIT WITH A TWO-GAME WINNING STREAK, THE SAUDIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR MORE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY WELCOME AND WILL FIND REASSURING HIS CATEGORICAL DISCLAIMERS OF ANY U.S. AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARDS SAUDI ARABIA. AKINS

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED BAGHDAD.

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